THE

CRISIS.

NUMBER, LXXXIII, *To be continued every Saturday,*

DURING THE PRESENT BLOODY CIVIL WAR IN AMERICA.

SATURDAY, Auguſt 17, 1776, Price Two-pence Half-penny.

Cannot help thinking it an aſtoniſhing event in the hiſtory of human affairs, (ſaid the emperor Juſtinian) that a whole people, conſiſting of free born men, and equal all by nature, ſhould with one joint aſſent reſign their rights into the hands of a ſingle perſon, a weak individual, a feeble mortal like themſelves, ſubject to the ſame infirmities, open to impoſition, liable to ſelf deluſion, and prone to errors, which in a moment may prove deſtructive to millions! And do you imagine, ſays, Beliſarius, that in a ſenate, or an aſſembly of the people there is more ſafety, greater wiſdom, or a ſteadier adminiſtration of juſtice? Was it under a monarchy that Camillus, Themiſtocles, and Ariſtides, were proſcribed? to multiply the members of government is to multiply its vices; for every individual mingles his own: the moſt ſimple form of government is the moſt eligible; and whether ſtates were founded upon conqueſt or original compact; whether mankind agreed

agreed to transfer their their natural rights to the civil magiſtrate, or where by force ſubdued into political ſociety; in either caſe it was reaſonable, that the moſt renowned for wiſdom or for valour, ſhould attract popular regard, and gain the general ſuffrage in his favour. I am not therefore, ſurpriſed that the magiſtrate, or the hero, ſhould be ſelected for the government of the whole; but that a ſingle perſon could be found willing to accept ſo painful a pre-eminence, is matter of aſtoniſhment. This part of the argument ſays Tiberius, is not ſufficiently clear to my apprehenſin. To form a diſtinct idea, replied Beliſarius; it will help you much, if you will figure to your fancy the firſt formation of a ſtate, and place yourſelf alternately in the different characters of the people and the ſovereign.

Where is the riſk. the people may be ſuppoſed to ſay, what hazzard do we run in giving ſupremacy to a king? with the good of the people we blend his happineſs; we make them but one thing? the force of the community becomes the ſtrength of the crown; *upon the general weal his glory is grafted*; and the regal character is at once derived from the people, and ſupported by them. The general love of his ſubjects will be his true ſelf-love, and his beſt intereſt will be found in juſtice, moderation, and beneficence.

This muſt have been the political creed of mankind.---But they did not take into their account, ſaid Juſtinian, the paſſions and the complication of motives that encompaſs a prince. Very true replied Beliſarius; they only thought of an inſeperable union of intereſts between the ſovereign and his people: that there ever could be a ſeparation of thoſe intereſts, and that the two parts of the body-politic, could live in a ſtate of mutual hoſtility, did not enter into their idea. Uſurpation appeared to them a kind of ſuicide, that could only proceed from a fatal deprivation of reaſon; and ſhould the prince be ſeized with ſo extravagant, a phrenzy. they relied upon the wiſdom of the legiſlature, to controul the paſſions of a man grown an enemy to himſelf. They foreſaw, indeed, that many might find their intereſt in miſchief and evil deeds: but they perſuaded themſelves that ſuch a confedracy in vice would be a ſmall minority, againſt which a great ſuperiority of good and honeſt men, with the prince at their head, would always preponderate. And indeed, till *fatal experience* opened the eyes of them, who could foreſee that kings would ſink to

ſuch

ſuch a degree of infatuation, as to devorce themſelves from their people, and combine with the avowed enemies of all the rights of man? a conduct like this is ſuch an outrage to nature and to reaſon, that it was neceſſary it ſhould actually happen, before the poſſibility of it could be believed.---It was not in the ſimplicity of antient manners to expect ſo ſhocking a revolution.

To conſider on the other hand the feelings of ſovereigns in that early period of mankind, he on whom the ſupreme authority devolved, muſt be deemed the party that had moſt reaſon, to be alarmed: for if the father of a family, who has the charge of five or ſix children to educate and to eſtabliſh in the world, feels an inceſſent anxiety that plants thorns upon his pillow, what muſt be the caſe with the chief family which is counted by millions?

He muſt have reaſoned with himſelf in this manner: "The compact which I make with my people, binds me to live for their good only: the repoſe of my life muſt be devoted to their happineſs, I engage myſelf by a ſolemn oath to regard the good of the community in every ligiſlative act, and ſubmit my own will to the ſpirit of the law. In proportion to the power committed to me, my natural liberty is abridged, the more my ſubjects confide in me, the ſtronger are the obligations I am under:---for the frailties of my nature, my errors, and my paſſions, I render myſelf accountable: I give my people a kind of juriſdiction over me; and in ſhort by conſenting to reſign, I abdicate myſelf."---The private man is as it were annihilated, to make room for royalty to engroſs the ſoul. Can there be a more generous ſacrifice? an engagement of ſo ſolemn a nature: and yet theſe were the ſentiments af Antoninus and Marcus Aurelius. "I have nothing properly my own" ſaid one of them, "My very palace is not mine," was the delaration of the other,---The few of their ſtamp thought the ſame.

In the appendage of ſovereignty, vulgar error marks only ſome external circumſtances of parade, which ſerve to awaken envy, ſuch as palaces, the ſplendor of a court, the homage that is paid, together with the pomp and magnificence which policy attached to the regal

ſtate,

ſtate, in order to give it ſanction and authority. And yet, amidſt all this brilliancy, the ſovereign is no more than mere man, overwhelmed with ſplendid cares, diſtracted with anxieties, a ſelf-conſuming votariſt for the public good and a victim to his duty if he be zealous to perform it, an object of ſcorn if he neglect it, and of deteſtation ſhould he betray it. Under perpetual reſtraint, and fluctuating for ever between good and evil, he finds himſelf environed with enemies enemies to his quiet, with painful vigils, devouring cares, a tedious apathy that makes him weary of himſelf, and ends in a diſtaſte of every thing: Behold there the portrait of a king! it is true invention has exhauſted itſel to make his enjoyments counter-balance his cares; but his cares are numberleſs, and his peaſures are confined within the ſcanty circle of his wants. The higheſt luxury is not ingenious enough to give him one new organ of ſenſation; and while peaſures ſolicit him on every ſide, nature. quite harraſſed down forbids enjoyment, and the palled appetite refuſes all.

Thus every thing about him is ſuperfluity; his extenſive palace is but a void immenſe, of which he occupies a little corner; under crimſon curtains and gilded ceilings he ſeeks in vain that ſweet repoſe which dwells in the peaſant's cottage; and at his table the pleaſure of the monarch ends, when appetite craves no more.

I perceive ſaid Tiberius, that every thing cannot be enjoyed, where every thing abounds;---but is the pleaſure of chuſing nothing in the account?

"Alas! young man! (explained Beliſarius! my worthy young man! you are not acquainted with that incurable diſeaſe, ſatiety. It is the moſt fatal languor of the mind. Are you acquainted with the cauſe of it? the power of enjoying with facility makes us liſtleſs, and diſguſted at every thing. Either our deſires have not time to rivive, or they revive to loath the affluence that invites too ſoon. Art has wearied itſelf in ſtudying delicacies to provoke and quicken the languid appetite; but the powers of perception are decayed, the inlets of pleaſure are obſtructed, the incentives to action are extinguiſhed in the ſoul, and delight itſelf has loſt both its allurements, and its gratifications. Woe to the man who can command every thing

thing with a wiſh! for as, on the one hand, the predominant idea of a total privation ſaps all the vigor of the mind, by fixing a train of corroding reflections; ſo, on the other, a conſtant habit of enjoyment gives inſipidity to what were otherwiſe exquiſite, and thus life loſes its reliſh.

You will grant me, however, interpoſed Tiberius, that there are refined and ſenſible delights, in their nature proper for the gratification of a monarch, which are always ſure to give rational enjoyment, without the danger of diſguſting by repetition--As for inſtance? ſays Beliſarius--The love of glory, for inſtance replied the young man---But what ſort of glory?--Why, of all the various claſſes of glory, renown in arms muſt hold the foremoſt place--Very well that is your poſition and do you think the pleaſure that ſprings from conqueſt has a ſincere and laſting charm in it? Alas! when millions are ſtretched in mangled heaps upon the field of battle, can the mind in that ſituation taſte of joy? I can make allowance for thoſe who have met danger in all its ſhapes; they may be permitted to congratulate themſelves that they have eſcaped with their lives; but in the caſe of a king, born with a ſenſibility of heart, the day that ſpills a deluge of human blood, and bids the tears of natural affection flow in rivers round the land; that cannot be a day of true enjoyment. I have more than once traverſed a field of battle: I would have been glad to have ſeen a Nero in my place; the tears of humanity muſt have burſt from him. I know there are princes who take the pleaſure of a campaign, as they do that of hunting; and who ſend forth their people to the fray, as they let ſlip their dogs: but the rage of conqueſt is like the unrelenting temper of avarice, which torments itſelf and is at laſt inſatiable. A province has been invaded; it has been ſubdued; it lies contageous to another not yet attempted; deſire begins to kindle; invaſion happens after invaſion; ambition irretates itſelf to new projects, till at length comes a reverſe of fortune, which exceeds, in the mortification it brings, all the pride and joy of former victories.

But to give things every flattering appearance, let us ſuppoſe a train of uninterrupted ſucceſs; yet, even in that caſe the conqueror puſhes forward; like another Alexander, to the limits of the world; and

and then, like him, re-meaſure back his courſe, fatigued with triumphs, a burthen to himſelf and to all mankind; at a loſs what to do with the immenſe tracts which he has depopulated, and melancholy with the reflection that an acre of his conqueſts would ſuffice to maintain him, and a little pit-hole to hide his remains from the world. In my youth I ſaw the ſepulphre of Cyrus; a ſtone bore this inſcription.

—"I am Cyrus; he who ſubdued the Perſian empire. Friend, who-"ever thou art, or wherever thy native country, envy me not this "ſcanty ſpace that covers my clay-cold aſhes."--- Alas! ſaid I, (turning aſide from the mournful epitaph,) is it worth while to be a conqueror!

Tiberius interrupted him with aſtoniſhment; Can theſe be the ſentiments of Beliſarius?---Yes, young man, thus thinks Beliſarius, he is able to decide upon this ſubject. Of all the plagues which the pride of man has engendered, the rage of conqueſt is the moſt deſtructive.

Printed and Publiſhed for the AUTHORS by T. W. SHAW, Fleet-Street, oppoſite Anderton's Coffee-Houſe, where Letters to the Publiſher will be thankfully received. New Editions of all the Numbers of this ſpirited Paper, are now ready for Sale, and *comlete ſets* will be ſent to any Part of *England*, *Carriage Free*.